



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Mt. Hood National Forest

Hood River Ranger District  
6780 Highway 35  
Mt. Hood-Parkdale, OR 97041  
541-352-6002  
FAX 541-352-7365

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**File Code:** 1950

**Date:** April 26, 2013

Dear Interested Citizen,

The Hood River Ranger District on the Mt. Hood National Forest (the Forest) has identified you as an individual, agency, or organization that has shown interest in the planning process for the **Mt. Hood Meadows Parking Improvements** Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This project is located within the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort Permit Area on the Hood River Ranger District. The legal description for the project is: Sections 10 & 11, T3S, R9E.

### **Project Overview**

The Hood River Ranger District is proposing to expand parking by building the Twilight Parking Lot and to construct new maintenance facilities (Sunrise Maintenance Shop) within the permit area. The needs for expanded parking and new maintenance facilities were identified in the Record of Decision for the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement, including Forest Plan Amendment No. 10 (January 1997). As such, the primary purpose of this project is to serve the design capacity for parking, including area for snow storage, and maintenance facilities that was conceptually approved while minimizing environmental impacts from parking lot construction and maintenance.

Six alternatives are considered: No Action Alternative, Proposed Action, and four action alternatives. The action alternatives are Alternative 3 (New Nordic Trails), Alternative 4 (Elk Meadow Master Plan), Alternative 5 (Elk Meadow), and Alternative 6 (Preferred Alternative). All alternatives also include constructing a bus shop, the associated access road, and a Nordic guest services building. The connected actions associated with the alternatives are: installing utility lines to service the new facilities; constructing left and right turn lanes from Highway 35 to Forest Service Road 3545; relocating an impacted wetland; and, constructing Nordic ski trails. See attached summary for more details.

The DEIS for this project is now complete. It is available on the Forest website, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/projects>. If you would like us to send you a compact disc or a hard copy of the DEIS, please notify Jennie O'Connor Card at [jennieoconnorcard@fs.fed.us](mailto:jennieoconnorcard@fs.fed.us) or 541-352-1255.

### **Opportunity for Public Comment**

As directed by the National Environmental Policy Act (1969), the Forest Service is now seeking comments from individuals, organizations, local and state governments, and other federal agencies that may be interested in or affected by this project. Mt. Hood National Forest is providing a 45-day public comment period for this DEIS. The comment period will commence on the date that notice of availability is published in the Federal Register and the legal notice is published in *The Oregonian*.



Comments will be accepted via mail, fax and email at the following address.

Mt. Hood Meadows Parking Improvements EIS  
Hood River Ranger District  
6780 Highway 35  
Mount Hood-Parkdale, OR 97041  
541-352-7365 (fax)

You may also hand-deliver your comments to the above address during normal business hours from 8:00 am to 4:30 Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. Electronic comments may be submitted to [comments-pacificnorthwest-mthood-hoodriver@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificnorthwest-mthood-hoodriver@fs.fed.us) in a format such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc).

This project is still in the process of being completed and no decision has been made yet. The Forest is requesting your comments on this project to help guide the final decision. Upon completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, there will be a pre-decisional objection period. Individuals or entities who have submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project during *any* designated opportunity for public comment established by the responsible official are eligible to file an objection during the pre-decisional, administrative review process (36 CFR 218). Comments must be specific and relate to the proposed action. For this project, the designated opportunities for public comment to date have included the scoping period in July 2011 and field trip in September 2012. Comments must be signed, or in the case of electronic or telephone submissions, commenters must verify their identity upon request to be eligible to object.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project, available for public inspection, and released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

If you have any questions concerning this proposal, please contact Jennie O'Connor Card at (541) 352-1255 or [jennieoconnorcard@fs.fed.us](mailto:jennieoconnorcard@fs.fed.us). Thank you for your continuing interest and participation in this process.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Joy Archuleta*  
JOY ARCHULETA  
Acting District Ranger

cc: Michelle Lombardo

## **Mt. Hood Meadows Parking Improvements Summary Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

On peak days and weekends there is inadequate parking capacity at the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort (MHM). MHM has seen a steady increase in skier visits over the past ten seasons and managers anticipate this trend to continue. Also, the existing maintenance facilities are co-located in the Mt Hood Meadows Main Parking Lot. Combining the industrial bus parking and vehicle maintenance functions with the public areas at the Main Parking Lot presents safety concerns related to traffic flow and related to maintenance activities taking place outside the existing facilities. Plus, the current location removes parking capacity at the Main Parking lot.

The needs for expanded parking and new maintenance facilities were identified in the Record of Decision (ROD) for Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Area Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (Master Plan), including Forest Plan Amendment No. 10 (January 1997). As such, the primary purpose of this project is to serve the design capacity for parking, including area for snow storage, and maintenance facilities that was conceptually approved while minimizing environmental impacts from parking lot construction and maintenance.

The Proposed Action (Alternative 2) proposes to construct a 7.2 acre parking lot for both downhill and Nordic customers. This new parking lot, referred to as the Twilight Parking Lot, would be located east of the Elk Meadows trailhead and west of the Oregon Department of Transportation sand shed with access via Forest Service Road (FSR) 3545. In total, 9.4 acres would be cleared for this parking lot, snow storage, and a storm water facility. Also, the vehicle maintenance functions would be moved away from the Mt. Hood Meadows Main Parking Lot and located on the north side of the existing Sunrise Parking Lot.

The Forest Service developed five additional alternatives: No Action (Alternative 1) and four other action Alternatives (Alternatives 3, 4, 5 and 6). The No Action (Alternative 1) is defined as the current condition and was compared to the underlying need for action. The Proposed Action (Alternative 2) was developed in response to a proposal from MHM. Alternatives 3, 4 and 5 were developed based on public and agency issues and concerns. The issues and concerns were related to Master Plan consistency and Nordic skiing. Lastly, Alternative 6 was developed as the Preferred Alternative after considering the identified issues, public involvement and environmental consequences presented in Chapter 3.

All alternatives also include constructing a bus shop, the associated access road, and a Nordic guest services building. The connected actions associated with the alternatives are: installing utility lines to service the new facilities; constructing left and right turn lanes from Highway 35 to FSR 3545; relocating an impacted wetland; and, constructing Nordic ski trails.

The Preferred Alternative for this project is Alternative 6. The Responsible Official feels this alternative best responds to the public comments received during the scoping period and throughout the planning process.